

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

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Memorandum

TO : Mr. W. C. Sullivan *WCS*

DATE: October 5, 1961

FROM : R. W. Smith *SR*

SUBJECT:

THE FUND FOR THE REPUBLIC
BOOK REVIEW: THE SOCIAL BASIS OF AMERICAN COMMUNISM
BY NATHAN GLAZER *Summary*
CENTRAL RESEARCH MATTER

SYNOPSIS:

Captioned book, reviewed by Central Research Section, is eighth in a series of studies financed by Ford Fund for the Republic to survey communist influence in American life. The book is both a history and analysis of membership of the Communist Party from its beginnings to the mid-1950's. Author takes "sociological" approach to examine various elements from which Party expended recruiting efforts and the response of the groups to these efforts. He concludes that while Party efforts were successful at some times and among some groups, over-all, communism in America was a failure. References to Director and FBI are not derogatory, but mainly are quoted membership statistics taken from public records. Author Nathan Glazer not investigated by Bureau, but several references noted in Bufiles. In February, 1960, one Nathan Glazer and three others wrote letter to editor of New York Times urging clemency for Harry Gold, Morton Sobell, and David Greenglass.

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

AKH:lms

(7)

- 1 - Mr. Belmont
- 1 - Mr. Sullivan
- 1 - Mr. Baumgardner
- 1 - Miss Butler
- 1 - Mr. Howe
- 1 - Section tickler

See
 ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
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CENTRAL RESEARCH

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Memorandum Smith to Sullivan

Re: The Fund for the Republic Book Review

The Social Basis of American Communism

By Nathan Glazer

DETAILS:

Book Sponsored by Fund for the Republic

The Social Basis of American Communism, by Nathan Glazer, published in August, 1961, by ~~Harcourt, Brace and World, Incorporated~~, New York City, has been reviewed by the Central Research Section.

This book is the eighth in a series of studies on communism in American life under the general editorship of Clinton L. Rossiter. The project was begun in January, 1955, when the Ford Fund for the Republic allocated funds for the series. (100-391697-651)

A Study of Party Membership

The book is both a history and an analysis of the membership of the Communist Party up to the mid-1950's. This "special study of the membership," as the author states in his introduction, aids in understanding communism in America because membership, and its "social composition," is a most important aim of any Communist Party. He says that, according to communist theory, the two main targets of Communist Party efforts to recruit should be the most exploited and most repressed workers. In the United States, the industrial workers and the Negroes. However, in American reality, these groups did not prove to be most responsive.

Author's Approach

The author takes a "sociological" approach to examine each of the various groups of people from which he says the Party obtained its greatest response. Devoting a chapter to each group, they are: (1) the elements, mainly in the Socialist Party of World War I, from which the first members of the Communist Party were drawn; (2) the immigrant workers who made up the greater part of the Party during the twenties; (3) the native-born workers and the workers in trade unions; (4) the middle-class and professional groups increasingly prominent in the late thirties and forties; and (5) the Negroes whose recruitment became intense after World War II.

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The author sets forth a flood of statistics, including 42 pages of notes, comments, and sources, on Party membership for the various ethnic and social groups to show the Party's successes and failures to influence these groups.

Author's Conclusions

While pointing out partial success by the Party during various periods, the author concludes that, "over-all, communism in America was a failure." His reasons are that in America, even the most oppressed and most miserable could see that the normal processes of American democracy could give them more than the communists ever could. Self-interest, which according to the communists' own theory should be the spur that brings the masses to them, operated here to drive them away. And so the communists had to resort to the special quirks of history that made some groups, at some times, open to them; they operated in these openings with their mixture of organizational skill and moral blindness, and achieved some successes. But in the end, these strains and twists in American democracy were insufficient to give them lasting success.

Mention of the Director and the FBI

The Director and the FBI are mentioned several times in the book, though not critically or derogatorily. In the introduction (p. 12), the author states the perfect material for this study could only be found in the possession of the FBI or the CP, USA. The Director is mentioned (p. 179), and the FBI (pp. 93, 116), but in each case, these are FBI estimates of Party membership which the author has extracted from Congressional reports or the book, Report on the American Communist, by Ernst and Loth.

The Author

According to book jacket, Nathan Glazer was born in New York City in 1923, graduated from City College in 1944, and received his A. M. from the University of Pennsylvania the same year. He has taught at the University of California in Berkeley, Bennington College, Smith College, and Columbia University. He is the author and coauthor of several books and contributes regularly to a number of magazines.

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The Social Basis of American Communism

By Nathan Glazer

Bufiles reveal that no investigation has been made on author; however, there are several references to him. (1) He is the author of "A New Look at the Rosenberg-Sobell Case" which appeared in The New Leader, July 2, 1956 [redacted] (2) During April and May, 1959, the name Nathan Glazer, Bennington College, appeared on a list of subscribers to the Peking Review, a strongly procommunist English language publication printed in Peking, China (100-394984-6317). (3) One Nathan Glazer and three other individuals wrote a letter to the editor of the New York Times, February 16, 1960, urging an act of clemency to free Harry Gold, Morton Sobell, and David Greenglass (101-2483-A).

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Clinton L. Rossiter

Clinton L. Rossiter, head of the study project on communism in American life financed by the Ford Fund for the Republic, is chairman of the Government Department at Cornell University.

Bufiles indicate that Rossiter was disapproved for security clearance, following an investigation by another Government agency which conducts intelligence investigations, because he gave as a reference a person who had been listed as one of the individuals controlling the American Russian Institute, of Hollywood, California. The American Russian Institute has been designated by the Attorney General pursuant to Executive Order 10450. (116-78904-26; Monograph, The Fund for the Republic, Inc., pp. 49, 96)